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AUTHOR Cooper, Anne; Davenport, Lucinda
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ABSTRACT

A study examined changes in the treatment of women's issues and feminism from 1975 to 1985--the United Nations (UN) designated "Women's Decade"--by two nationally circulated newspapers. The purpose was to find out how much and what kind of news was reported during the three UN World conferences for women held in 1975, 1980, and 1985; specifically, the study looked at the amount of coverage, placement of stories, tone of stories (degree of conflict emphasized), and use of the terms "feminist" and "feminism." In all, 80 stories from "The Washington Post" and "The New York Times" were content analyzed. Results indicated moderate coverage in 1975, scant coverage in 1980, and large coverage in 1985 of the respective conferences. Story placement shifted dramatically over time, from news pages in 1975 to lifestyle pages in 1980, and to an even division between the two sections in 1985. The use of the terms "feminist" and "feminism" reversed completely in the decade covered, with two-thirds of the stories in 1975 using the words and two-thirds of the stories in 1985 not using them. The one constant in the study was the consistently higher than average number of conflict stories reported (never below 40%), lending support to charges that conflict is over-selected in coverage of the Women's Decade. (FL)

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MEDIA COVERAGE OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DECADE: FEMINISM AND CONFLICT

Dr. Anne Cooper

Lucinda Davenport

E.W. Scripps School of Journalism

Ohio University

Athens, OH 45701

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MEDIA COVERAGE OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DECADE:

FEMINISM AND CONFLICT

ABSTRACT

The authors examine changes in treatment of women's issues and feminism during 1975-85 by two "national" newspapers. Coverage of three UN World Conferences for Women, held in 1975 in Mexico City, 1980 in Copenhagan and 1985 in Nairobi, is analyzed for amount of coverage, placement, tone (degree of conflict) and use of "feminism/feminist."

Results showed moderate coverage in 1975, scant coverage in 1980 and a spectacular jump in coverage in 1985. Placement shifted dramatically over time, from news pages (83%) in 1975 to lifestyle pages in 1980, to an even division between news and lifestyle pages in 1985.

The use of "feminist/feminism" reversed completely in the 10 years; two-thirds of stories used the words in 1975, while two-thirds of stories did not use the words in 1985. Subjective analysis showed the term to be much more negative in 1975.

The one constant in the study was the consistently higher than average number of conflict stories (never below 40 percent, compared with an average conflict content of 33 percent, according to other researchers). By 1985, nearly half (48 %) of women's decade stories showed moderate to high conflict on a 5-point scale. This finding lends support to critics' charges that conflict is over selected in UN Women's Decade coverage.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DECADE:

FEMINISM AND CONFLICT

> It is difficult for this retired editor, who is far from a flaming feminist, to understand how some of the country's outstanding newspapers could pay so little attention to an event meaningful to the health, economy, education and well-being of half the world's population (Jurney, 1983, p. 14).

I. INTRODUCTION

The event to which Jurney refers, the 1980 UN World Conference for Women and Forum, attracted some 9,000 participants to Copenhagen, Denmark. However, only three major US newspapers--the New York Times, Christian Science Monitor and San Francisco Examiner--sent correspondents to cover the meeting.

Five years later, at the final UN World Conference for Women and Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, something had happened. One of this paper's authors, who attended the meeting, noticed a striking consistency in friends' comments after her return to the US: "Oh, Nairobi! There's been a lot about that on the news."

Americans were hearing from Lynn Sherr of ABC television, Susan Stamberg and Linda Werthheimer of National Public Radio and other broadcasters; they were reading Associated Press, United Press International, Time, Newsweek, news service and special correspondents' reports. In San Francisco, Minneapolis, Terre Haute and a few other cities, they were receiving daily reports via satellite from the newly formed Women's International News

Service. In all, 1,400 journalists had been accredited to cover the Nairobi meeting, which attracted nearly 16,000 participants.

But quantity aside, what was the nature of this coverage? A number of studies are under way to assess the Nairobi story systematically, including one funded by the Norweigian government. That project will compare the "menu" of offerings (stories filed by the major wire services) with the "diet" selected by newspaper editors in 12 countries: Australia, Chile, Ecuador, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Norway, Senegal, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and the US (Gallagher, 1985, p.8).

Gallagher says the study will discover whether coverage has improved in the last 10 years. As Appendix A shows, International Women's Decade included not only the 1985 Nairobi meeting, but one in Mexico City in 1975 and the Copenhagen conference in 1980. Media coverage "was widely criticized on two general counts. The first was the small number of printed stories . . . .The second criticism was that the stories that did appear tended to trivialise or sensationalise events, issues and personalities" (Gallagher, 1985, p. 8).

Birgit Wiig of Norway, editor of the daily newspaper issued at Forum '85 by an international staff, elaborated on the second criticism in an editorial. She says reporters who covered Mexico City and Copenhagen found their stories greatly changed at the home desks: "An entirely different aspect was sometimes given to their (often positive and constructive) reporting on the conference through editing, headlines and editorials" (Wiig, 1985,

p.1).

The Norweigian study will have great value because of its comprehensiveness and the possibilities it will offer for cross-cultural comparisons. But it will assess change only by implication. It will compare Nairobi with Mexico City and Copenhagen, but it will not include Mexico City and Copenhagen.

The authors of this paper believe that the main value in studying Nairobi coverage lies in its comparability to the two previous conferences. The meetings themselves are parallel events: all three sponsored by the UN, all held outside the US, all following the same basic format of official/ non-official gatherings that attracted high-profile individuals and offered feature material on colorful "unknowns."

As attendance increased at each successive meeting--from about 5,000 at Mexico City to almost 16,000 at Nairobi--a researcher can attempt to chart the impact of these growing numbers on coverage (see Appendix A). But more significantly, such a decade-long overview can assess changes in media gatekeepers' treatment of women, the women's movement and feminism.

All three meetings were "meaningful to the health, economy, education and well-being of half the world's population" (Jurney, 1983, p.14). But subjective criticism has charged the media with myopia, a selective bias toward conflict, hostility and distortion in 1975 and 1980. The addition of the third and final meeting presents us with three equally spaced mileposts to chart change in a momentous 10-year journey for women.

II. RELATED STUDIES

"Women's news" has not traditionally had a good press. Newspaper sections devoted to such news used to be roundly criticized for "living on payola and freebies" (Von Hoffman, 1971, p.52), serving up fluff instead of substance (Van Gelder, 1974) and preferring to "operate on a stock formula" marked by "shallow reporting," including "the total trivia of local women's clubs as if it were news" (Guenin, 1973, p.27).

The renaming of women's pages at most metropolitan newspapers took place before the 1975 International Women's Decade meeting in Mexico City. For example, by early 1972 the Chicago Tribune had begun a Lifestyle section on Sunday and one called Feminique on Monday; the Minneapolis Star had created its Variety pages; the Louisville Courier-Journal had chosen the name Today's Living; and the Los Angeles Times has opted for the name View.

Two newspapers of interest to this study also changed. The Washington Post had started its Style section, while the New York Times adopted a changing format: Living on Wednesday, Home on Thursday and a Style section on other days.

However, some critics charged that even a renamed section could still be "a dumping ground for anything the male editors consider a 'woman's story' " (Van Gelder, 1974, p.112). Van

Gelder (1974, p.116) cited the need for "a living and style section geared to people, male and female."

By 1975, academic studies of women's pages began to appear. Guenin (1975) paired renamed with traditionally named sections in newspapers of three circulation sizes: more than 500,000, more than 100,000 and less than 100,000. She found that neither traditional nor renamed sections met critics' suggestions for substantive content.

Miller (1975), who studied news photographs 1973-74 in the Los Angeles Times and Washington Post, found that men far outnumbered women except for lifestyle sections. In a related study, Miller (1976) examined a four-week sample of women's/ lifestyle sections in prestige dailies in both 1965 and 1975. She determined that lifestyle and consumer coverage had increased om the New York Times, but not in the Washington Post.

Cooper (1978) found that, in 1968, a majority of articles in the women's pages of both the New York Times (84 percent) and Washington Post (58 percent) dealt with traditional topics: home, fashion, food and society. Ten years later, the revamped lifestyle sections at the two papers had taken different directions. The Post had a majority of entertainment articles (56 percent), with a secondary emphasis on traditional content (19 percent); the Times had a majority of traditional articles (50 percent), with a secondary emphasis (21 percent) on lifestyle content--personal relations, sex roles, work/career topics.

In sum, these sections have changed, but neither the Post

nor the Times has eliminated the type of content often criticized as fluff. Thus a news article on one of the UN Women's Decade conferences located in a lifestyle section would be surrounded to some extent by fashion, food and society stories--a less substantive context that if it had appeared on a news page.

The most extensive study of UN World Decade for Women coverage (Jurney, 1983) did not even explore the implications of story placement within a newspaper; it concentrated instead on presence or absence and content of stories about the 1980 Copenhagen meeting. Of nine newspapers studied, only the New York Times, Denver Post and St. Louis Post Dispatch "had balanced and comprehensive stories in advance of the meeting and follow-up stories which were substantive" (Jurney, 1983, p.14). Five papers had six or fewer stories. The Times--the sole paper in the study to send its own correspondent to Copenhagen--was cited for its especially informative coverage.

Jurney's main finding about story content concerned the emphasis on conflict. Wire service coverage "focused on conflict, and even in those stories where conflict was countered with accomplishment, the emphasis was such as to portray the meetings as in disarray" (Jurney, 1983, p.14).

Headlines skewed content even further. Examples include:

"UN Women's Meet Ends in Controversy"--head for a UPI story in which the final third dealt with accomplishments;

"Women's Conference Ends in Bitterness, Recrimination"--head for a well-balanced New York Times News Service story;

"UN Women's Conference Ends in Controversy"--head for a UPI story; and

"A Discordant Conclusion for Women's Conference"--head for a well-balanced New York Times story.

Moreover, if a newspaper used only a short item, that item tended to emphasize conflict. One newspaper reported the end of the 1980 Forum and conference in three sentences, the first of which read: "The UN Conference on the Decade for Women ended Wednesday in Copenhagen in disarray by adopting a Plan of Action for the next five years that included bitterly controversial Middle East-related political resolutions." According to Jurney (1983, p.14), " 'Disarray' is an inaccurate word in a sentence which admits that a Plan of Action was adopted."

By contrast, a cooperative action, the signing of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by the US and 52 other nations (see Appendix A), was "probably the most important event of the conference" (Jurney, 1983, p.15). The Associated Press reported on the signing and some provisions of the convention, but the information was largely ignored. Three papers did not mention the convention at all, three mentioned the signing but not the provisions and three gave some information about it.

Obviously negative coverage is not cnfined to Women's Decade meetings. Negativity, disaster or "bad" news "appears to be overselected from the real world for inclusion in the news media and to be given more prominent display after selection" (Haskins,

1980, p.157).

Moreover, the "reading public can aptly be described as 'bad news bears.' Reader interest in bad news averages about one-fourth to one-third higher than for all other kinds of news combined (Haskins, 1980, p.159). Since 1950, the proportion of bad news in the mass media has remained quite stable--about one-third of news content, with good news also representing one-third (Haskins, 1980, pp.152-154).

In the absence of specific research on media reporting of conflict at international meetings, we must rely on studies of reporting conflict in communities and at local meetings. By analogy, but with caution, we can expand the ideas to encompass the international community.

Social conflict is a principal topic in newspaper content because conflict is a central fact of community life and social change (Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, 1980, p.17). In contrast to small, close-knit, homogeneous communities, pluralistic communities need a mass media system to alert them to conflict and to show them how disagreements are settled (Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, 1980, p.8).

The pluralistic international community no doubt needed to know about conflicts at the three UN Women's Decade meetings--both political (e.g., the Iran-Iraq and Arab-Israeli dsiputes) and social (e.g., disagreements over abortion, family planning, polygamy and clitoridectomy). But Jurney's research indicates that the other shoe--the instructive information about agreements

reached--never dropped into the media agenda. The attenuated or absent stories did not permit any instruction to take place.

Furthermore, conflict reporting allows the feedback process to take its course. Thus the emphasis on conflict is not necessarily disruptive, but is part of the process of resolving conflicts and managing them at tolerable levels (Olien, Donohue and Tichenor, 1978, p.446). An international meeting that does not last long has a disadvantage. Feedback cannot take place; the "positive" side of conflict reporting has no chance to operate.

Perhaps the conflict that Jurney (1983) discerned was confined to 1980 and resulted from the small number of stories printed. Skewed coverage of one meeting lasting 17 days could be explained by factors beyond the meeting itself. To date no extensive study of conflict reporting at the 1975 Mexico City meeting has been done. The following pages will examine coverage by fewer media than the Jurney study but over a longer period of time, enabling us to discover trends and draw supportable conclusions.

III. METHOD

This study had as its goals to find out how much and what type of news was reported in national media in the US during the three UN world conferences for women and to chart charges over time in coverage, 1975-85. Furthermore, the authors hope to draw inferences about gatekeepers' treatment of women's issues and feminism.

As Allen (1985, p.12) points out, "the World Conference of Women is an event that seems ideal for such an examination [of media coverage]. First, it is a single event, yet one that is politically complex enough to reflect the real world. Second, it is a matter of record, that is, factual enough to enable us to measure coverage quantitatively as well as qualitatively."

Furthermore, the three parallel conferences took place at equal intervals and under similar circumstances, each lasting approximately the same number of days. All have arguable, bona fide news value. Changes in coverage may be attributed to changing views on news and women or on context, with the central event remaining as constant as is possible outside a laboratory situation.

The study addressed four topics, each with related questions:

1. Amount of coverage--did the volume of coverage increase as attendance at each conference increased? (See Appendix A).

2. Placement--were conference stories put in lifestyle or in news sections? In other words, was the content viewed as a women's story or a news story about women? How did placement change 1975-85?

3. Tone--what degree of conflict was emphasized in each story? Did the emphasis change 1975-85?

4. Feminism--who is a feminist and what is feminism? How were these words used? How have the connotations changed 1975-85?

In the absence of true national newspapers in the US, two "local" papers with national circulation and influence were chosen, the New York Times and the Washington Post. Use of these papers permitted comparison with previous studies. Both "great dailies" emphasize completeness of international coverage as one of their marks of greatness (Merrill and Fisher, 1980).

The Times sent its own correspondents to cover all three conferences, while the Post sent correspondents to the 1975 and 1985 meetings; it had wire coverage available for the 1980 meeting.

No sampling was done. All stories published or broadcast just before, during and just after each conference were studied. (See Appendix A for dates.) Every day's papers and broadcasts were examined during the relevant periods for any mention of the women's conferences.

All stories except those on opinion pages were included. However, articles mentioning the meeting but without substantive focus upon it were excluded. An example of one of the few excluded stories was an article about a commemorative stamp issued to mark the decade.

For each story, the following information was coded: date, section, page, column width, story length, number of photographs accompanying the story and source (the paper's own correspondent or a wire service). Amount of coverage in square inches was calculated by multiplying length by width.

Stories were rated for degree of conflict on a five-point scale, from 1 (least conflict) to 5 (most conflict), with 3 as the neutral point. Key words and concepts for each scale value included:

1 agree, pass resolution, resolve conflict

2 meet, gather in unity, make compromise

3 stories dealing with fact and description or containing fairly balanced doses of positive and negative points

4 demand, criticize, assail, clash (verbally), attack

5 walk out, go on strike

Many content analyses use wider scales, but this study dealt with a series of conferences only, not the whole range of news events and human endeavors. The five-point scale was deemed more than adequate.

Finally, the coders marked how many times the word "feminist" or "feminism" was used in the body and headline of a story. Beyond simply counting, this topic required subjective assessments. While the numbers will be reported in the following section, conclusions about this important and changing concept will be found in the discussion pages.

IV. RESULTS

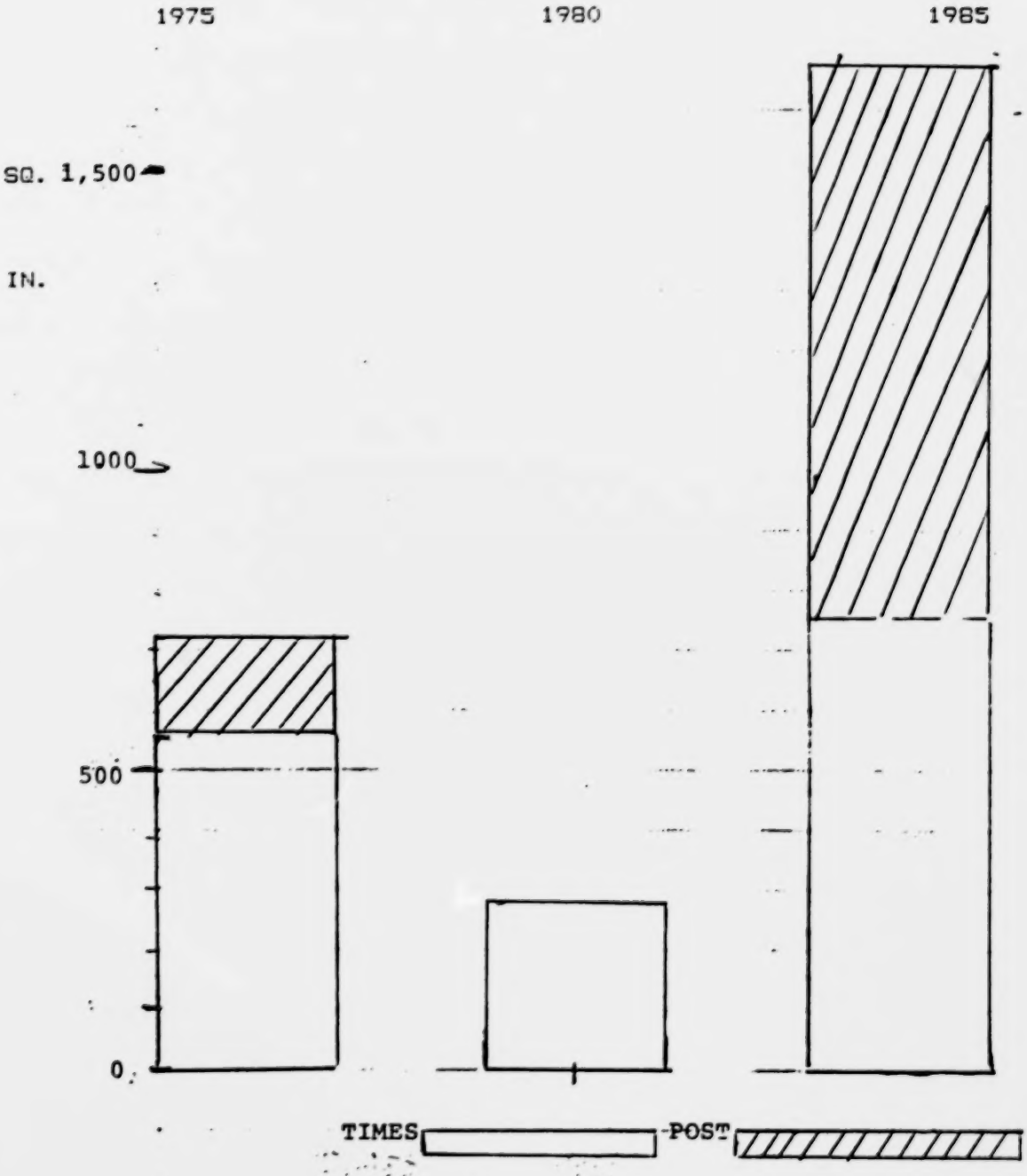
This study analyzed a total of 80 newspaper articles and xxx network television newscasts relating to the three UN Women's Decade meetings in 1975, 1980 and 1985. Appendix B consists of a summary of all data for newspaper coverage,

Appendix B contains information about the number of photographs and number of wire stories vs. the paper's own correspondents' stories, but these topics were not central to the study. A quick glance at Appendix B reveals, for example, that only nine of the 80 stories were from wire services, and that just half of the 80 stories had one or more photographs. More importantly, this appendix gives a shortened version of the story's headline, so one can get an idea about each story's content. Information from the appendix is presented in Tables 1-3 and Figure 1.

1. Amount of coverage The unit of analysis for these findings was the square inch, a measure used so that stories with different column widths could be aggregated. Figure 1 shows a respectable amount of coverage in 1975, a dramatic drop in 1980 and then a spectacular jump in 1985.

Clearly coverage did not run exactly parallel with attendance at the conferences, since attendance went up from 1975 to 1980, but coverage went down. However, the spectacular attend-

FIGURE 1. AMOUNT OF WOMEN'S DECADE COVERAGE



dance at Nairobi (about 16,000) was mirrored in a monumental volume of coverage (1,676 square inches--a skyscraper when set beside the 286 square inches of 1980). Other reasons for the high profile of Nairobi will be discussed in the next section.

2. Placement The unit of analysis for Table 1 (and all other tables) was the individual newspaper story. Table 1 shows that over 10 years, a dramatic change occurred in how gatekeepers viewed the three parallel conferences. The first conference was clearly a news story; each paper made the same judgement to put most conference reports on news pages, so that when the totals are combined, an overwhelming 83 percent of stories surfaced on news rather than lifestyle pages.

The scantily covered second conference was viewed as a one-third news, but two-thirds lifestyle, story by the New York Times. The Post gave it no coverage at all. One might see 1980 as an interim stage, with the two newspapers disagreeing on how and whether to cover the event at all.

The heavily covered third conference showed strong agreement and clear decisions. Both papers viewed it as approximately equally a lifestyle and news story; indeed, when figures for both papers are pooled, the percentages for news vs. lifestyle sections are 50/50. Furthermore, both papers gave it exactly the same number of stories, 22; while the duplicate numbers may be a coincidence, both agreed strongly that Nairobi was a major story deserving continuous coverage for its 19-day duration.

TABLE 1. PLACEMENT OF WOMEN'S DECADE STORIES: STYLE V. NEWS PAGES

		POST	TIMES	BOTH	PERCENT
1975					
	Style	0	4	4	17%
#	News	5	15	20	83%
stories	Totals	5	19	24	100%
1980					
#	Style	0	8	8	67%
stories	News	0	4	4	33%
	Totals	0	12	12	100%
1985					
#	Style	10	12	22	50%
stories	News	12	10	22	50%
	Totals	22	22	44	100%

3. Tone To collapse five categories into three for presentation on this table, scale values 4 and 5 were aggregated into "conflict," scale values 1 and 2 were aggregated into "cooperation" and scale value 3 remained as "neutral." In fact, Appendix B shows that few stories fell into the extreme ranges of 1 or 5, so the smaller number of categories did not lose much information at all.

Table 2 shows that, unlike the changes over 10 years for amount and placement of coverage, tone showed remarkable consistency. The percentage of stories with a conflict angle stayed between 40 and 50 percent for all three conferences (46 percent in 1975, 42 percent in 1980 and 48 percent in 1985).

We see some change in the neutral/cooperation cateogires over time. The least-covered conference, the 1980 Copenhagen meeting, showed the most neutral stories (42 percent), while the most-covered conference, the 1985 Nairobi meeting, showed the fewest neutral stories (23 percent).

These results show a tendency to more conflict coverage than one would expect, based on the research of Haskins (1980). Haskins found that since 1950, negative news has averaged about one-third, with positive news also about one-third. The conflict element in coverage of the conferences, consistently in the 40 percent range, may give some support to critics who say that negativity is overemphasized. Conversely, the figures for positive or cooperative news are lower than the one-third one might expect.

TABLE 2. TONE OF WOMEN'S DECADE STORIES: DEGREE OF CONFLICT

		POST	TIMES	BOTH	PERCENTAGE
1975					
#	Coop	1	4	5	21%
stories	Neut	2	6	8	33%
	Conflct	2	9	11	46%
	Totals	5	19	24	46%
1980					
#	Coop	0	2	2	17%
stories	Neut	0	5	5	42%
	Conflct	0	5	5	42%
	Totals	0	12	12	100%
1985					
#	Coop	8	5	13	30%
stories	Neut	5	5	10	23%
	Conflct	9	12	21	48%
	Totals	22	22	44	100%

4. Feminism Table 3 again returns to the pattern shown by placement and amount of coverage: clear changes over the 10-year period of study. In 1975, two-thirds of the stories about the Mexico City conference used the words "feminist" or "feminism." In 1980, at the sparsely covered Copenhagen conference, more than half the stories did not use these terms (58 percent), while less than half did use them (42 percent).

By 1985, a major change had taken place. About two-thirds of the stories did not use the terms (64 percent), while about one-third did use them. In just 10 years, a complete reversal had occurred. The following section will give examples of usages of "feminist" and "feminism" throughout the decade and try to draw some conclusions about why this interesting change took place.

TABLE 3. USE OF 'FEMINIST/FEMINISM' IN WOMEN'S DECADE COVERAGE

	POST	TIMES	BOTH	PERCENTAGE
1975				
# stories using	3	12	15	63%
# stories NO use	2	7	9	37%
Totals	5	19	24	100%
1980				
# stories using	0	5	5	42%
# stories NO use	0	7	7	58%
Totals	0	12	12	100%
1985				
# stories using	9	7	16	36%
# stories NO use	13	15	28	64%
Totals	22	22	44	100%

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The clear evidences of change this study discovered--and the one striking instance of a consistently unchanging emphasis on conflict--bear further comment. In most cases, the suggested reasons for the phenomena observed will be speculative and grist for further research.

1. Amount of coverage Two factors may account for the spectacularly high profile of the 1985 Nairobi conference. First is its obvious news value; Nairobi was to be the final meeting of the decade, but beyond that, the last of the century--indeed, of the millennium. That "last chance" aura that prompted many delegates to attend the conference also increased its news value.

Was it also a symbol of an era passing--the end of an era when women's activism and the fight for rights was new(s)? Solutions to problems do not compact themselves into 10-year units, but the Nairobi meeting at least meant the end of official UN attention to the degree that had existed during 1975-85.

Second, the ambiguity about how to treat the conference was resolved. In 1980, Copenhagen was a non-story to the Post and a fairly unimportant lifestyle story to the Times. By 1985, both papers agreed that Nairobi was a big story, they agreed on how big and they agreed that it deserved partly news and partly lifestyle placement.

The huge numbers of participants confirmed but did not

determine these judgements, which had been made before the meeting opened. Each paper's decision to send two correspondents preceded the surge in registrations; only 3,000 were expected at the NGO meetings, with the final figure of almost 14,000 straining Nairobi's resources severely.

The small amount of Copenhagen coverage perhaps resulted partly from ambiguity and partly from its middle position--not the first and not the last. An otherwise newsworthy UN conference obviously should not be given short shrift because of its middle position. Further research using another parallel series of conferences could determine whether this women's conference was held to a higher standard than other conferences.

2. Placement The aggregated figures showing a "balanced" news/ lifestyle placement in 1985 tell only part of the story. Strong arguments could be made that many of the lifestyle stories were hard news rather than feature articles and were misplaced. The Times much more than the Post made jarring decisions. For example, what do stories with the following headlines have to do with "style"?--

At Nairobi women's parley/ old wounds still fester (7/15/85)

US women split with delegates in Kenya (7/20/85)

Disputes on key issues stall Kenya parley (7/26/85)

The Post tended to place such stories in its World News section.- One could ask why the Times did not so the same.

In the absence of Post coverage in 1980, we can again cite egregious examples of Times placement. The opening or closing of

a major international has intrinsic news value, but in 1980 the Times placed both of these stories in its style section:

UN world conference on women opens today in Copenhagen

As the conference ends, what now for women?

The first story (6/14/80) appeared on the same page as a recipe for a sardine salad sandwich, accompanied by a picture of a fish. The second (7/2/80) appeared with a story about the Adolfo fall fashion show. Previous research suggesting that the Times did not go far in substantive changes when it removed its women's page title seems supported.

3 Tone (conflict) The higher-than-average (Haskins, 1980, pp.152-154) conflict tone of conference coverage has serious implications, since the percentage in 1985 reached almost half of all stories (48 percent). Does this mean that the greatly expanded 1985 coverage carried as its price a conflict orientation? These results indicate that it did.

However, even though conflict created coverage, it did not mean a breakthrough into the news pages. Appendix B shows that many conflict stories appeared on lifestyle pages, including those cited just above. Nor did the most highly conflictive stories end up on page 1. Only four stories were rated as 5; the first three appeared in the Times, the fourth in the Post:

Many exit as Mrs. Rabin/ speaks at conference (6/26/75)

Conference women/ scuffle with police (7/19/80)

Arabs in walkout/ at women's talks (7/23/85)

Cuba, allies attack US/ on anti-terrorism move (7/23/85)

What then did let a conference story break through to page 1? Consistently, the tried-and-true news values of "first" and "last" did the job, just as they had in determining which conferences got large amounts of coverage. Of the eight page 1 stories, six dealt with conference openings and closings. The other two, appearing in the Times in 1975, concerned actions of New York delegates. No page 1 stories appeared in 1980, underscoring that conference's low news profile.

4. Feminism The heavy usage of this term in 1975 bears further exploration. A closer look at those stories using the term more than twice reveals a number of themes. Often the term was used almost as an offiical title for Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer, Gloria Steinem and a few non-celebrities from other nations. Frequently the term was used in quotes.

Probably most revealing was the term's discretionary use by reporters and the negative words associated with "feminist." Examples of these pairings include "Feminists derogatorily refer" (Times 6/19/75), "no-less-hostile American feminists" (Post 6/25/75), "American feminists denounced" (Times 6/24/85), "feminists and their sometimes abrasive tactics" (Times 6/19/75).

In 1980, the term was used mainly to describe non-Americans at the conference. By 1985 its use had become more judicious and selective, but was often used to describe any Third World woman who was modern and/or Westernized.

In addition to insights about gatekeepers, the term tells a great deal about how readers' perceptions have changed. The lead

on a 1975 Times story (7/2) read, "Elizabeth Reid of Australia stated the militant feminist viewpoint here when she said, 'In the world outside, we are ignored, we are invisible, we are not important.'" Was that really militant just 10 years ago?

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APPENDIX A

WOMEN AND THE UNITED NATIONS: HISTORICAL LANDMARKS

1945 — UN charter affirms "equal rights of men and women."

1947 — UN Commission on the Status of Women, a subsidiary of the UN Economic and Social Council, is established

1952 — UN General Assembly adopts Convention on Political Rights of Women

1972 (12/12) — UN General Assembly proclaims 1975 as International Women's Year

1975 (6/19-7/3) — More than 100 delegates to first UN World Conference on Women in Mexico City adopt World Plan of Action and approve Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Non-governmental representatives hold a parallel conference, the Tribune.

1975 (Dec.) — UN General Assembly adopts the World Plan of Action and a resolution establishing 1976-85 as the UN World Decade for Women.

1979 — UN General Assembly accepts Denmark's invitation to host a med-decade conference in Copenhagen.

1980 (7/14-7/31) — In Copenhagen, 1,326 delegates from 145 states meet, while 8,000 non-governmental participants attend parallel NGO Forum. Australia, Canada, Israel and the US cast the four votes against the World Programme of Action; it is accepted by a vote of 94 yeas and 22 abstentions.

1981 — Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women goes into effect, following the ratification or accession of 20 UN member states.

1985 (7/16-27) — More than 2,000 delegates from 157 countries meet in Nairobi, Kenya, adopting a final document by consensus. Almost 14,000 attend the NGO Forum, 60 percent of them from Africa and the Third World (7/10-19).

APPENDIX B

1975 Post Date	Page	Sect	Headline	Col.	Lgth	Pics	Wire		Cnflct		Fem
6-20	16	A news	120 states air	1.3	15.5	0	o		3		3
6-22	12	A news	UN conf arouses	1.2	15	1	o			4	5
6-25	27	A news	Feminists say is	1.3	17.4	0	o			4	10
6-30	15	A news	Rural w ask to	1.2	15.0	0	o		3		0
7-3	31	A news	W's parley appro	1.3	17.9	0	o	1			0
NYT											
6-19	41	Fam/st	Int'l w's year	1.2	26.2	0	o		3		3
6-19	41	Fam/st	Defender of w rt	1.8	12.6	1	o		3		0
6-20	1,3	1 news	Equal rts vital	1.3	16.4	1	o	2			1
6-21	3	A news	Division emerges	1.3	13.2	1	o			4	0
6-22	1,9	1 news	US grp assails	1.3	13.4	0	o			4	5
6-22	45	Fam/st	At w's parley	1.6	16.8	3	o			4	0
6-24	3	A news	W find unity	1.3	11	0	o			4	3
6-25	7	A news	Americnas ease	1.2	14.4	0	o		3		1
6-26	2	A news	Stark picture	1.3	27.9	0	o	2			1
6-26	2	A news	Nancy exit a Mrs.	1.2	3.5	0	w			5	0
6-27	1,2	1 news	Miss Krupsak bids	1.3	12.2	1	o			4	1
6-27	2	A news	UN aide asks	1.3	6.9	0	o		3		0
6-28	11	A news	W's parley studi	1.3	13	0	o	2			0
6-29	2	A news	Scrappy, unoffic	1.2	21.3	1	o			4	1
7-1	8	A news	UN inquiry urged	1.3	10.4	0	o			4	2
7-2	40	Fam/st	As conf ends	1.7	20.4	12	o		3		3
7-2	35	A news	An Abzug assault	1.3	5.1	0	o			4	1
7-3	1,8	1 news	A plan to improv	1.3	21.2	0	o	1			1
7-3	8	A news	Excerpts for act	1.2	29.1	0	o		3		0
1980 NYT		Post: no coverage									
7-14	12	B styl	UN world conf on	1.6	14	2	o		3		2
7-14	12	B styl	All my interests	1.6	13.4	1	o		3		0
7-15	10	A news	W are losing grn	1.7	10.7	1	o			4	0
7-16	3	A news	Polit issues bec	1.7	4.2	1	o			4	0
7-18	4	B styl	Female circumci	1.7	14.2	1	o		3		0
7-19	3	A news	Conf w scuffle	1.6	9.7	1	o			5	0
7-21	15	A styl	W at wrld parley	1.6	15.6	1	o		3		5
7-25	12	A styl	Dissident seeks	2.2	8.1	3	o			4	5
7-25	12	A styl	At w's conf	1.7	14.6	1	o	2			2
7-28	5	B styl	Amendm on sexism	2.1	13.8	1	o	2			3
7-29	5	A news	US withdraws res	1.7	1.1	0	w			4	0
7-31	12	C	W's parley backs	1.6	6.1	0	o		3		0

NYT 1985

7-10	1,10C	News	W of wrld gather	2	29.5	1	o	2			1
7-10	10	C Lvng	M Reagan critici	2	7.25	0	o			4	0
7-10	10	C Lvng	Leticia Shahani	2	23.5	1	o		3		5
7-13	44	Style	Polit wars in pe	2	23.25	2	o			4	1
7-14	28 E	Wk Rev	Goals seem clear	2	20.25	3	o		3		0
7-15	14 A	Style	Wounds fester	2	17.25	0	o			4	2
7-16	3 A	News	W's parley opens	2	13.75	0	o	2			1
7-17	1,11	C Lvng	Clash on fam pln	2	23.0	0	o			4	0
7-18	1,12	C Home	Joyous adventure	2	24.75	2	o	2			0
7-19	2	A News	US blamed at w's	2	9.0	0	w			4	0
7-19	3	A News	World strike call	2	4.75	0	w			4	0
7-20	48	Style	US w split with	2	27.5	1	o			4	1
7-21	7 E	Wk rev	UN conf opens in	2	8.5	0	-			4	0
7-21	9	A News	E-W rivalries dom	2	14.0	0	o			4	0
7-23	9	A News	Arabs in walkout	2	7.75	0	o			5	0
7-24	1,12	C Lvng	In 3rd wrld, w's	2	18.75	0	o		3		0
7-24	12	C Lvng	W lead fight for	2	13.5	1	o	2			0
7-25	1,12	C Home	Islam: Fem v. Fu	2.5	9.5	3	o			4	5
				2	15.0						
7-26	12	A Styl	Disputes on key	2.5	19	2	o			4	0
7-26	12	A Styl	Reporter's notebk	2.75	10.25	0	o		3		0
7-27	1	A News	W's conf drps ref	2	13.5	1	w	1			0
7-28	1	A News	US del protests	2	10.0	0	w		3		0

Post

7-10	3	F Styl	M Reagan critici	2.5	15.5	1	o			4	0
7-10	1,9	F Styl	Kenya to evict	2	5.0	1	o			4	0
				2.5	13.0						
7-11	1,10	B Styl	Gather in unity	3	5.0	1	o	2			0
				2	21.5						
7-11	10	B Styl	Reagan's charge	2	7.5	0	w		3		0
7-12	6	D Styl	Kenya resolves co	2	12.0	0	w	2			0
7-13	1,4	C Styl	Outrage, optimism	2.5	7.0						
				2	27.25	1	o		3		7
7-15	1	A News	US,3d Wld at odds	2	44.5	1	o			4	1
7-15	1,2	B Styl	An uneasy truce	1.75	9.75	2	o		3		11
				2	21.75						
7-16	10	A Wrld	US makes comprom	2	17.0	1	o	2			0
7-16	10	A Wrld	W evicted fr hotl	2	26.0	0	o			4	0
7-17	17	A Wrld	Applause, critici	2	19.5	0	o		3		2
7-18	30	A Wrld	Str wrs assailed	3	2.75	0	-			4	0
7-20	--	A Wrld	US backs fem move	2.25	16.0	1	o	2			4
7-20	1,5	G Styl	Fem finale: high	2	33.5	0	o	1			2
7-21	27	A News	US, Soviets clash	2.75	3.25	1	w			4	0
7-23	11	A News	Cuba,allies attck	2	12.0	1	o			5	0
7-25	1,8	B Styl	Fam plan discord	2.75	6.25	0	o			4	0
7-26	27,33	A Wrld	Cnsensus collapse	2	22.5	0	o			4	2
7-26	27,33	A Wrld	Group guarantees	4	3.25	2	o	2			0
7-27	13	A News	Zionism cmpromise	2	23.0	0	o	2			0
7-27	1,4	G Styl	Orders,concession	2.5	6.25	0	o		3		4
				2	30.0						
7-28	18	A Wrld	Calls for progrss	2	26.5	2	o	1			5